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The University of Illinois Rhetoric Program

By ROBERT H. MOORE

University of Illinois

SINCE 1940, in close and continuing cooperation with the University Senate Committee on Student English, the English Department of the University of Illinois has re-vamped and expanded its normal and remedial program in Rhetoric and Composition. Study and experimentation is still going on, particularly through the Joint Commission on Research in Student English, but the basic patterns have been set, and the experience gained through the war years and the post-war period of readjustment suggests that future modifications will probably come in matters of detail rather than reorganization. For the convenience of high school and college teachers and administrators who from time to time request information about the organization and methods of the Illinois Rhetoric program, the current issue of the *Illinois English Bulletin* is being devoted to a summary of the entire program, and more detailed reports on several of its special features.¹

1. For earlier, now somewhat outdated, reports, see Edward F. Potthoff, "The Program for Improving Students' Use of English at the University of Illinois," *Illinois English Bulletin*, XXXIII, No. 7 (April, 1946), 1-8 (also in *College English*, VII, No. 3 (Dec., 1945)); "The Graduation Requirement Relative to Proficiency in Written English at the University of Illinois," *Illinois English Bulletin*, XXXIII, No. 1 (Oct., 1945), 1-5; Robert H. Moore, "The Upperclass Remedial English Course of the University of Illinois," *ibid.*, 5-9; W. G. Johnson, "A Report on the University of Illinois Experimental Writing Clinic," *Ibid.*, 9-13; Cornelia P. Kelley and Charles W. Roberts, "Rhetoric Proficiency Tests at the University of Illinois," *Illinois English Bulletin*, XXXI, No. 6 (March, 1944), 1-24. For a summary of the national problem, see Jessie Howard and Charles W. Roberts, *The Problem of English Composition in American Colleges and Universities* (University of Illinois Bulletin, XXXVIII, No. 48, July 22, 1941), 94 fff.

I. THE NORMAL PROGRAM

For most students the normal program consists of a Freshman Rhetoric Proficiency Examination, two three-hour courses, and an English Qualifying Examination taken at the end of the sophomore year, the passing of which is required for graduation. Of the two examinations we shall speak later, as we consider the University's remedial program. The two freshman courses, required of all but foreign students and a few whose work on the Proficiency Examination demonstrates that they do not need elementary instruction, constitute "Rhetoric" as the average student sees it.

1. Rhetoric 101 and 102 (formerly Rhetoric 1 and 2)

Courses as large as Rhetoric 101 and 102 (enrolling some three thousand students a semester and being taught by a staff of approximately a hundred, many of them graduate assistants) require a high degree of standardization and supervision. To secure this, the Rhetoric Division of the English Department publishes a *Freshman Rhetoric Manual and Calendar*, setting forth the purposes and regulations of the course and listing daily assignments.² Instructors are at liberty to vary these assignments enough to secure necessary flexibility, but are in general required to cover the course material as it is outlined. The two courses are designed to develop in the student (in the phrasing of the *Manual*) "the ability (a) to understand and evaluate what" he hears and reads, "and (b) to write and speak intelligibly, effectively, and convincingly."

Rhetoric 101 deals with the expression of ideas based on the student's personal observation and experience. After a preliminary three-week period of diagnosis and review, including a review of grammar and punctuation, it proceeds to paragraphing, to discussion, reading, and practice of description and narration as aids to exposition, of organizing the development of a clearly defined thesis, of outlining, and of such elementary types of exposition as the process theme. It requires weekly themes, oral reading and reporting, and three book reports. The best themes, in both Rhetoric 101 and 102, are printed in *The Green Caldron*, a Magazine of Freshman Writing, which appears four times during the school year and provides both models and motivation for student work.³ The

2. Copies of the *Freshman Rhetoric Manual and Calendar* may be obtained by addressing the Illini Union Bookstore, 715 S. Wright St., Champaign, Illinois. Price 35c.

3. Current issues of the *Green Caldron* may be obtained by addressing the Illini Union Bookstore. Price 25c.

books for reports are drawn from a special Freshman Reading Room collection, containing both classical and contemporary fiction, non-fiction, poetry, essays, and drama.⁴

Rhetoric 102 continues the study of exposition, passing from the expression of ideas drawn from personal experience to the techniques of discovering and using the ideas of others, especially in "research papers," two of which are written during the semester. Nearly half of the work of the semester is devoted to a study of the processes of reasoning—deductive and inductive thinking, the presentation of evidence, and the nature and danger of emotional rather than logical appeals. Two book reports are written during the semester, and as in Rhetoric 101, the professional writing used for models and reading practice is supplemented by student writing in the *Green Caldron*.

The courses in their present form were set up in 1944, after five years of study and experimentation. They lack the glitter of some of the "new" courses in "communication" which have sprung up in recent years, but they produce results.

2. Verbal Communication

Two courses in Verbal Communication, which may be taken in place of Rhetoric 101 and 102 by freshmen in the Division of General Studies lay somewhat greater stress on oral practice, and have now passed completely under the direction of the Speech Department.

3. Advanced Rhetoric Courses

The normal Rhetoric program, it need hardly be said, offers work beyond the elementary, required courses of the freshman year. Sophomores, or those whose proficiency has earned them exemption from Rhetoric 102, may enter Rhetoric 133 (formerly Rhetoric 3), a course in Expository Writing, or Rhetoric 144 (4), Narrative Writing. On the upperclass level are Rhetoric 205 (6), Advanced Narrative Writing, 227 (8), Advanced Expository Writing, 230 (30), The Writing of Poetry, and 246 (16) Modern English Grammar. On the graduate level are Rhetoric 345 (105), Theory and Practice of English Composition—"An examination of modern prose style and the consideration of problems confronting writers and teachers of writing at the college level,"—and Rhetoric 491, Research in Special Topics.

4. The books in this collection are listed in the *Manual and Calendar*.

II. THE REMEDIAL PROGRAM

A state university with an enrollment of 23,000 students has of necessity to face the problem of what to do about those who enter with a poor background in English, whether they come as freshmen or as graduate students, and those who, for whatever reason, fail to maintain acceptable standards in writing during their university career. They may be dismissed from the university out of hand, they may be tolerated, or they may be helped. The University of Illinois has set up a remedial program designed to help all but the most indifferent.

1. The Freshman Rhetoric Proficiency Examination and the English Qualifying Examination

A proficiency examination is given all freshmen at entrance, and another examination is given second semester sophomores who made grades of C or D in Rhetoric 102 or an equivalent course at another institution and who must demonstrate a reasonable proficiency in English to qualify for graduation. The two examinations are essentially the same. Both consist of a locally prepared, hundred-part objective test and a theme written on assigned topics. Standards are higher on the later test, and the theme topics call for longer and more mature treatment; there are no other differences. The greater weight is given to the proficiency displayed on the theme, though a high degree of correlation exists between the objective test scores and writing proficiency. Approximately 75% pass the freshman proficiency examination; 85% pass the qualifying examination.

2. Rhetoric 100 (formerly Rhetoric 0)

Freshmen who fail the proficiency examination are denied admittance to Rhetoric 101. The department offers a non-credit, high school level course (concentrating on the elimination of the most common errors and on paragraphing) which students may take to help them reach the level of proficiency required for admittance to Rhetoric 101.⁵ After one semester, whether or not they have taken Rhetoric 100, students may again take the proficiency examination. They must pass it and qualify for Rhetoric 101 within three semesters. If they do not, they are dropped from the University.

5. The plan and daily assignments for Rhetoric 100 are given in the *Manual and Calendar*. See footnote 2 above.

3. Rhetoric 200 (formerly Rhetoric 5)

Upperclassmen who have failed to pass the English Qualifying Examination for graduation are required to take a remedial course, Rhetoric 200, which carries three hours of credit. It provides an intensive review of grammar, mechanics, paragraphing, organization, and development. The final examination in the course is identical in form with the Qualifying Examination, and students must pass that examination to pass the course. If they do not pass, they may repeat the course, or, after a semester, repeat the examination. They may take the examination, in fact, at semester intervals, as long as they remain in the University, but they must pass the examination before being granted a degree.

4. English as a Foreign Language

The University of Illinois attracts a large number of foreign students, many of whom are deficient in English; this group is predominantly Chinese and South American, but there are representatives of many European nations as well. Students for whom English is a foreign tongue, and whose proficiency in English is demonstrably poor as a result, are excused from the normal Rhetoric 101 and 102 requirement. Two three-hour courses designed especially for foreign students, Rhetoric 114 and Rhetoric 115, fulfill English requirements for graduation. Three other courses, Rhetoric 111, 112, 113, are set up for students needing particular help in certain phases—grammar and sentence structure, sentence patterns, and pronunciation. Foreign students are not exempt from the Qualifying Examination requirement.

5. The Writing Clinic

Entering freshmen secure help on their writing problems through Rhetoric 101 and 102, or, if they are badly handicapped, through Rhetoric 100. Upperclassmen who are badly handicapped are helped, perforce, through Rhetoric 200. There remain upperclassmen and graduate students, not in need of intensive remedial work, who may have difficulty in the writing of examinations, term papers, or reports. For them the English Department, on the recommendation of the Committee on Student English, maintains a diagnostic and supervisory Writing Clinic. Briefly and experimentally operated during the war years, it was reestablished in 1948. Staffed by members of the English Department, it is open to all students. Consultation is voluntary, but deans and faculty may urge attendance. It is not a tutoring bureau, and it is only

incidentally a writing laboratory. It attempts to discover the student's chief weaknesses and to suggest remedial measures he himself may pursue.

6. The Joint Commission on Research in Student English

The Department of English and the University Senate Committee on Student English, made up of representatives of the various colleges of the University, sponsor jointly a research commission which projects and directs studies designed to identify and clarify the problems in student writing which remain to be faced, and to suggest methods by which they may be solved. The University, in other words, does not pretend to be entirely satisfied with the program that has been worked out. A major problem remaining, for example, is the elimination of the unfortunate vulnerability of the entire program at one point. It can help those who are willing to be helped; it can even, sometimes, guarantee that students have been rendered capable of writing decent English; but it cannot guarantee that they will later make use of what they have learned. That largely depends on the writing standards explicitly demanded by those for whom they write.

Remedial English for Upperclassmen at the University of Illinois

By ERNST G. MATHEWS

University of Illinois

RHETORIC 200 (formerly Rhetoric 5) is a three-hour credit course required of all students who fail the English Qualifying Examination. The student who fails the examination is required to report to his dean, who specifies when the student should register in Rhetoric 200, usually the semester following the failure of the examination. Foreign students who fail are referred to a subcommittee of the Committee on Student English for further consideration: they may be excused from further courses in composition or required to take a course in English for foreign students. Normally there are from six to ten sections of Rhetoric 200 taught each semester, with enrollment limited to fifteen students per section.

Rhetoric 200 is taught only by seasoned rhetoric instructors. No fixed plan for the course is laid down, and no specific textbooks are required for all sections. Early in the course the instructor examines samples of the student's writing—usually including the composition he wrote as part of the qualifying examination—and diagnoses the difficulties of the individual student. With the limited enrollment in each class, individual attention is possible.

A typical class is conducted in the following way. An early theme and the qualifying examination indicate the weaknesses which the students have to overcome. Since these spring, in the typical instance, from a poor foundation in grammar, punctuation, and paragraph structure, the instructor reviews fundamentals with the aid of a handbook or workbook of his own choice. The exercises in such a book are done outside class and carefully discussed in class, but are usually not graded. The final grade in the course rests upon the grade given the final examination (which corresponds in form and content to the qualifying examination); this final paper is graded by a committee of which the instructor is one member. Consequently the student realizes that learning fundamentals in order to avoid errors in his writing is the chief motive for this review of fundamentals. Particular stress in this part of the course is laid upon terminal punctuation—the sentence fragment and the comma splice—and upon the use and punctuation of phrases and clauses in such a way as to yield simple, clear, and varied sentences.

Themes are written continually throughout the semester—some outside class, more of them impromptu. Early themes are brief, with stress on the use of topic sentences and their development by various means to yield mature paragraphs. The average student needs a great deal of urging in the matter of supplying details, examples, and the like, to reinforce his ideas. With the ability to write mature paragraphs established, the instructor passes on to organization of the whole theme, showing how various patterns are possible and giving the student practice in their use. The themes are marked rigorously and discussed individually with the student. Grades on themes are given as a record of progress and as an indication of the student's status: he is told that an *E* means that the theme would fail the qualifying examination, a *D* that it would probably pass, a *C* or higher that it would pass comfortably. The course grade, to reiterate, depends upon the performance on the final examination. A few students who have demonstrated their competence are allowed to take a qualifying examination before the end of the semester. If they pass they are given a grade for the whole course.

A book of selections or a current magazine is used by some instructors to supply models and examples of skilled writing. Some approach to the techniques of reading may be made by means of these selections.

Students in Rhetoric 200 have demonstrated, by passing their college work for at least four semesters, that they have the ability to learn. Most of them, as juniors, are sufficiently mature to take their work seriously and to see the importance of correctness in their writing. Consequently the number who pass Rhetoric 200 is relatively high.

Rhetoric 200, it should be noted, is but one item in the program to guarantee the literacy of the University of Illinois graduates. The course itself does little to solve the problem of backsliding—the sloppy writing of those students who can write correctly but do not bother to do so. The Writing Clinic and pressure from the faculty as a whole must solve this problem. But in its place—the assistance of the upper-class college student who has never fully mastered the fundamentals—Rhetoric 200 has proved an effective tool.

The University of Illinois Writing Clinic

By ROBERT H. MOORE
University of Illinois

THE University of Illinois Writing Clinic is a young project, and its methods are still, consequently, subject to change. Originally established in 1944, it was allowed to lapse during the confusion of post-war expansion. Since its first director is no longer on the campus, its present incarnation is virtually a new venture, feeling its way.

Although it is open to all students, including graduate students, it is primarily designed to provide assistance to upperclassmen whose deficiencies in writing skills are not sufficiently great to justify denying them a degree until they have successfully passed a three-hour remedial course—Rhetoric 200—but who are yet unsatisfied with their own ability to express themselves clearly and effectively in their course examinations or papers. Such students are customarily aware of their own weaknesses. They are weak in punctuation, or they spell badly; their writing is habitually too general, or they do not know how to organize their term papers or examination answers. Their course grades, consequently, suffer, and they want to know what to do about it. The Clinic attempts to provide them with suggestions for constructive self-help.

Consultation with the Clinic is voluntary, and this is perhaps its strongest point. Those who come in want help and are willing to work on their problems; they do not—most of them—expect miracles, but diagnosis, advice, and supervision. Some have been advised to come in by their instructors or the deans of their colleges; if they come reluctantly, little good, perhaps, results, though even here informality and sympathetic friendliness sometimes transform reluctance into willingness and potentially successful effort. Most are aware of their deficiencies, bring in specific problems, and want help. For them, the Clinic can do a good deal.

The first step in the process is diagnostic. A preliminary interview usually uncovers the principal source of difficulty. If it does not, diagnostic tests may be used, or, more commonly, the student is asked to write from suggested topics, or to bring in samples of examination or term-paper writing for analysis; occasionally both tests and writing are resorted to, until the counsellor is reasonably sure that the major sources of difficulty are clearly defined.

If the weaknesses are mechanical—punctuation, grammar, sentence structure,—discussion of the pertinent principles is followed by workbook exercises and writing practice, the latter emphasizing the necessity for revision with the weaknesses in mind. The writing is related as closely as possible to the type of writing with which the student is having trouble: sample examination questions or short reports on course material, for example, rather than “themes.” If the student makes the effort, the weaknesses quickly disappear.

Spelling, also a mechanical problem, is far more difficult. An excellent combined text and workbook is available, but the problem is so complex that few students persist enough to show great results.

Occasionally, the deficiencies are not primarily in writing, as the student suspects, but in reading ability; examination grades are low not because the student cannot say what he wants to, but because he wants to say things based on misconceptions arising from mis-reading. Such students are referred to the University of Illinois Student Counselling Bureau, which is prepared to assist in the strengthening of reading skills.

Non-mechanical deficiencies—weaknesses in the development or the organization of material—represent a very high percentage of the cases coming to the Clinic, in spite of the fact that great emphasis is laid on both in the University’s normal Rhetoric program. Students persist in feeling that any general statements which are clear to them as writers must be equally clear and satisfactory to readers. They persist in feeling that unity of topic is enough to secure unity in treatment, that the expectation of a clearly defined thesis is merely an aberration of rhetoric teachers. And they persist in feeling, especially in the writing of examinations, that they must begin writing as soon as possible, without taking time to plan what they want to say. Discussion of the psychological and rhetorical principles involved, emphasizing the necessity of writing for a reader and presenting material according to a logical and discernible pattern of organization, is followed by repeated practice, which again is related as closely as possible to the type of writing with which the student is having trouble. A very successful device—incidentally providing the student with nearly painless review of the course material—entails practice in writing, in a set time, answers to typical examination questions in courses the student is currently pursuing, taken from previous examinations, if they are available, or made up by the student himself. Those answers are then analyzed by the counsellor, improvements in organization and

development are suggested, and the experiment is repeated. By means of such practice, very great improvement can be made.

One final point, of major importance: The counselling in the Writing Clinic attempts to be invariably friendly and sympathetic. To allow the student to feel stupid or unwelcome or badgered is fatal to the securing of the voluntary and persistent effort which he must expend if his deficiencies are to be corrected.

I have suggested throughout that much depends on the students' making the necessary effort. Those who come to the Clinic expecting quick and painless therapy, or those who come with sullen reluctance and who cannot be persuaded to work to secure results—fortunately a small minority—can be helped only to the limits of the efficacy of exhortation and prayer.

English for Foreign Students at the University of Illinois

By HELEN BEVERIDGE

University of Illinois

THE number of foreign students at the University of Illinois has increased rapidly in the last four years. In September, 1945, there were 57. In February, 1947, when a special English course for foreign students was offered for the first time, there were 227. In February, 1948, there were 317.

Previous to February, 1947, there was no special instruction in English for these students. Undergraduates, who had to have six hours of English for graduation, took the same freshman rhetoric courses as American students and were held to the same standards of proficiency. The result was that most foreign students postponed rhetoric courses as long as possible until they had somehow learned enough English to pass the course. In the meantime, they were handicapped in their other courses by language difficulties.

As the numbers of foreign students increased, it became apparent that lack of proficiency in English was often a serious obstacle to profitable study and that there was an urgent need for English courses which would help foreign students with their language problems during their first semester or first year of study. Recognizing its responsibility to help these students overcome their language handicap in order to pursue other courses more profitably, the English Department initiated in February, 1947, an experimental course in English for foreign students.

Twenty-five students enrolled for this course, called Rhetoric 9, which met five hours a week for three hours' credit. At the request of students in this first class, it developed into a two-semester course, Rhetoric 9a and 9b, which was continued during the following year.

Although this course was a step in the right direction, it did not solve the problem. In the first group of twenty-five, the native languages were Chinese, Arabic, Turkish, Persian, German, Spanish, and French. Besides the differences in language background, there were also great differences in proficiency in English. At one extreme, there were students who had recently arrived and who could neither understand nor answer simple questions; at the other extreme, there were students who had been here several

years and could speak fluently but had difficulty in writing. There were students who needed to concentrate on English for a semester before they were ready to study other courses, and there were others who needed only a little help in pronunciation or writing. There was a need for a more intensive and elementary course for the most poorly prepared students, and a more flexible course which would train the better prepared students in the particular language skills which they still lacked.

If it were possible, it would be desirable to separate the students into homogenous groups with the same language background, not so that the students' native language can be used in class, but because students who speak different languages have different problems in English. Any good foreign language teaching must take into account the native language of the learner as well as the language to be learned. The only satisfactory materials for language learning are those based on a scientific descriptive analysis of the language to be learned compared with a parallel descriptive analysis of the native language of the learner.

It has been possible to set aside a section for the Chinese students only, since this is our largest foreign group. One semester there was a large enough group of Turkish students so that they could be put into one class, and there have been classes predominantly Spanish-speaking in which materials prepared for Spanish-speaking students were used. However, in the majority of the classes there is a mixture of at least four different languages, since along with these three relatively large groups, Chinese, Turkish, and Spanish, we have had a sprinkling of students whose native languages are Arabic, Persian, Armenian, Greek, Polish, Roumanian, French, Portuguese, Dutch, German, Norwegian, Danish, and Icelandic. In such mixed groups the few problems which the students have in common can be explained in class, but many of the problems have to be handled individually in conferences outside of class.

As far as competence in English is concerned, our foreign students fall into three general categories. (1) There are some who have attended American or English schools in which part or all of the instruction was given in English. These students are really bi-lingual and can take the same rhetoric courses which are required for American students. (2) There are students who can read and understand English well enough so that they can pursue other courses profitably but who still have language difficulties, especially in writing, which cannot be handled satisfactorily in regular classes for American students. (3) There are those who

speak and understand so little that they can take only a limited program for their first semester until they learn more English. These students can usually take courses in mathematics, and sometimes science, during their first semester, but they are not able to take lecture courses or courses which require much reading or writing. To meet these diverse needs more adequately the early program was revised, and this semester four new courses in English as a Foreign Language are being taught for the first time.

Those foreign students who belong in the third category, mentioned above, although few in number, present the greatest problem. Rhetoric 111, 112, and 113 have been planned for this group. Each of these classes meets three hours a week. Courses 111 and 113 may be taken separately, but most of the students in this group need all three courses.

Rhetoric 111 is a rapid review of grammar in which the most essential English sentence patterns are explained with enough productive oral drill to be sure that the student understands the explanation. The emphasis is on the spoken language, although there is some practice in writing.

However, it is not enough for the student to understand the structural patterns of English so that he uses them through conscious choice; they must become automatic. Rhetoric 112 provides intensive drill in the sentence patterns which are explained in Rhetoric 111 and therefore can be elected only with Rhetoric 111. Students who have serious difficulty in speaking or writing need both of these courses. They are planned as separate courses because there are a few students for whom a rapid review which does not include intensive drill will be sufficient, for example, students who have known English well at one time but who have not had any occasion to use English in recent years.

Rhetoric 113 is a course in pronunciation for students who have difficulty in understanding native speakers and in making themselves understood. It consists of a systematic study of the sound segments and intonation patterns of American English, with intensive drill. Each student will make frequent recordings on a Sound-scriber machine and will have regular weekly study periods to listen to his recordings and those of native speakers.

There are two sections of Rhetoric 113, one for Chinese students only, and a mixed group in which there are four students who speak Persian, two Turkish, two Spanish, and one Greek. Since the pronunciation difficulties which are peculiar to each of these languages are far more numerous than the difficulties which

they have in common, a great deal of individual work has to be done in this class.

The largest number of our foreign students fall into the second category. Rhetoric 114 has been planned for this group as a substitute for Rhetoric 101, which is required for American students. Rhetoric 115, which will be taught during the second semester this year, can be substituted for Rhetoric 102. Rhetoric 114 and 115 will fulfill the English requirement for undergraduate foreign students. These courses consist of oral and written composition and reading. They are practical courses with individual writing assignments which will give students practice in the kinds of writing they will have to do in their other courses. There will be some grammar review, but students who need much work in grammar will be advised to take Rhetoric 111 and 112 before taking Rhetoric 114.

On the basis of interviews with the dean of foreign students and on the basis of tests of composition, structure, and aural comprehension which are given to new foreign students before registration, students are advised which courses they need to take.

All of these courses are based on the assumption that the problems of learning a foreign language are not the same as those of learning one's native language, and that it is not necessary or even desirable to hold foreign students to the same standards of proficiency as those maintained for native users of the language. Foreign students are expected to attain a working knowledge of English approximately equal to that of an American student who has studied a foreign language in this country and then gone to a country speaking that language. It must be remembered that, for a foreign student, English is a foreign language which he must be able to use as a tool in order to learn the subjects he has come here to study, usually engineering, architecture, or chemistry.

A survey which we conducted last year shows that the difficulties encountered by increasing numbers of foreign students in our universities constitute a nation-wide problem and that most institutions are not completely satisfied with their present method of handling this problem. Most of the courses now being taught have been initiated during the last few years and are still going through a process of experimentation and change.

The Joint Commission on Research in Student English at the University of Illinois

By ERNST G. MATHEWS
University of Illinois

IN 1940 the Committee on Student English proposed that the Joint Commission on Research in Student English be set up as an aid to the Committee and as a valuable coördinator of research in its own right. The Commission was established, at the direction of the president of the University, in January, 1946, with the following personnel: the Director of the Rhetoric Division, the chairman of the Committee on Student English, a representative of the Provost's Office, at least two members of the Rhetoric Staff and others deemed desirable by the Committee on Student English.

During its first year the Commission did not undertake the sponsorship of any long-range projects, but reviewed projects already under way under the sponsorship of the Rhetoric Division and assisted to some degree in projects undertaken by Rhetoric staff members who were enrolled in Rhetoric 105. The pressures of a greatly changed and enlarged student body and of a shifting Rhetoric staff made the beginning of long-range projects seem inadvisable.

Even during the second semester of 1947-1948 the student body by reason of the preponderance of veterans, was not regarded as sufficiently typical to justify long-range study beginning with freshmen. Activities during the past year, therefore, have been limited to the examination of projects being carried on in Rhetoric 105 (now Rhetoric 345), and to the three projects outlined in the following paragraphs:

1. To assist in the establishment of effective courses in English for foreign students, the Commission drew up a questionnaire which was sent to a selected list of about fifty colleges and universities. The questionnaire was designed to supply information about the methods and materials used in courses for foreign students.

2. As a check on the standards applied in Rhetoric 200 and in the grading of the qualifying examination, a set of themes with a questionnaire involving the rating and grading of each was sent

to the personnel executives of about sixty industrial and business establishments and some forty high school administrators. The aim was to find how seriously the English in these themes would influence a prospective employer's judgment of the writers as employables. Individual items in the questionnaire also asked for statement about what elements in writing the executives think most significant. The same themes and questionnaires will be submitted to the Rhetoric staff this fall so that the judgment of teachers of college composition may be compared with that of business and school executives. Nearly all of the executives addressed have given careful replies, but the study as a whole cannot be completed until late in the present semester.

3. A project is under way to compare the English in written examinations throughout the University with the writing submitted as Part 2 of the English Qualifying Examination. Final examination papers from courses giving essay examinations—from all schools and many departments—were collected at the end of the second semester of 1947-1948. The papers of those students who had taken the qualifying examination were extracted and graded *Pass* or *Fail* on the same standards applied to the theme portion of the Qualifying Examination. The readers were all experienced rhetoric instructors who have been grading qualifying examinations for the past two or three years; each paper was graded by two or more readers. The comparison of these papers with the qualifying examination is now being made, and a record of the errors made on all papers is being drawn up. After this is completed the plan is to check the record of each student in his whole University program and particularly in his rhetoric courses.

It is hoped that this study, continued over a few years, will give a detailed picture of the writing side of the University careers of students of average and below-average ability in writing. This picture will give the Committee on Student English another check on standards applied to the Qualifying Examination, and may serve as the basis for some plan to tighten up writing requirements in courses throughout the University. Already several of the students whose writing on examinations was weak have been referred to the Writing Clinic for help.

During 1948-1949 the Joint Commission will continue the projects in hand and initiate any others which promise to improve the University of Illinois composition program.

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Northeastern: Miss Gladys Turner, East Aurora High School, Aurora

Chicago: Miss Alice C. Baum, Austin High School, Chicago

Chicago Parochial: Sister Mary Evelyn, Mercy High School, Chicago

